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ABSTRACT

This study of how race emerges for young children as a plausible explanatory framework for incidents in their everyday lives is based on a school term of observation in each of 3 British urban elementary schools, with over 150 hours of interviews with students, ages 10 and 11 years, in their last 2 years of primary (elementary) schooling. All three schools have minority populations, largely Asian and Afro-Caribbean, from 12 to 25 percent. Nine case studies illustrate responses of individual children. The study reveals that race and racism are significant features of the cultures of children in predominantly White schools, with the most common expression being racist name calling. Differences in overt racism among the schools seem to be the consequence of the effectiveness of the stance that educators and staff take toward racist incidents. Within children's cultures, it is primarily interactional ideologies that animate racist ideologies and translate them into social practice. There are also strong dynamics of racial egalitarianism within children's cultures, especially in adolescence, but these can be overridden and reversed through the emergence of powerful peer cultures based on racist interpretive frameworks and interactional repertoires. The chapters are: (1) Feeling Harassed? Racist Incidents in Britain; (2) Friend or Foe? Relationships between Black and White Children in School; (3) Children's Cultures, Black Experiences; (4) The Meanings of Racist Name-Calling; (5) Case Studies; (6) Sources of Racism; (7) Responses to Racist Incidents; and (8) The Four Girls. (Contains 129 references.) (SLD)

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